1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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592
596 seven) were extended in the sense of consisting of an undivided family of three generations with pooled income. There were also five households in which a mother had moved in with one of her divided married sons. The mere fact that the average life span of the Santal is relatively short and the fact that families generally fracture after the father's death are sufficient to account for the preponderance of the nuclear family.

592 Each economically undivided family has a part of the house set apart for the purpose of worship and sometimes also for the storing of rice and other valuables. A wall extending nearly
[192] across the house divides the largest room of the house in two; it is the smaller portion which is set apart, and it is known as
592 the "inner room" (*bhitar*; inside, as in Hindi). On almost all
769 festivals, offerings of rice beer are made here to the patrilineal
[192] ancestors, accompanied by prayers asking that the family be spared sickness (*handi bonga* = rice beer worship). At this offering the head of the household usually presides, accompanied by one or more male relatives. Offerings may be brought by females of the household if they are not menstruating at the time, but females not of the household may never enter on the grounds that "one never knows their condition." "Rice beer worship," with its offerings to the ancestors, is obviously expressive of the bonds within the extended family, but *Maran Buru*, the tribal deity, also receives his offering during ancestor worship, expressing the unity of the tribe.

556 Aside from the interconnected strands of kinship and territory, there is another socially relevant characteristic—wealth. As a social marker, like the inheritance of tribal offices, it provides social positions not attainable by all in the normal life
• [581] process. Much will be said of its divisive effects later; it is appropriate to note here that it operates in establishing mar-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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556 riage connections by joining together families of approximately
• [581] equal wealth and that it is an important source of power. There is a strong tendency for village officers and other members of [622] founding lineages to be richer than later immigrants; hence [624] wealth tends to be joined with hereditary office. In the informal councils which precede formal deliberations over disputes or policy, men listen more attentively to the statements of the wealthy. This attentiveness is a sign of respect, but also of recognition of the wealthy individual's ability to give or withhold favors; sometimes there is also the informal bribery of generous hospitality, and on occasion, outright bribes in return for support. Wealth differences can result in special likenesses and differences within Santal society, and even ceremonies graded in cost, as will be discussed later.

554 It would normally go without saying that those who hold
182 positions of special power and prestige have a special interest in the preservation of traditional solidarity and provide a natural source of endogenous pressure for the maintenance of traditional structure. It receives mention here only because it will soon be shown that other circumstances make these same privileged Santal especially subject to tribally disintegrative centrifugal pressures.

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178 nificant shifts in frequency during this period, nor were there
434 any appreciable changes in the distribution of per capita income.
583 Before considering comparable data from the *bustee*, it is necessary to examine other partial determinants of marriage-
554 type choice so that a controlled comparison can be made. The
583 most significant of these secondary determinants derives from the expectation by the Santal community that members of high standing will validate their status by arranging high forms of marriage—*DB* or *SB*—for their children. These marriages are the occasion for great "pleasure" and the villagers would feel deprived if their "big people" (*maraṅ hoṛ*) were to deny them this opportunity. Since inherited office confers prestige and is partially independent of wealth, it may be presumed, though adequate statistical evidence is lacking, that the holders of hereditary office often feel compelled to choose more expensive forms than income alone would dictate. In support of this contention is the observation that of the seven *DB* of which I have knowledge, all involved the marriage of a son of a hereditary village officer and one was the son of a headman. Although shared values and understandings are prominent determinants of marriage type, idiosyncratic differences such as the desire for prestige may occasionally prove decisive. "Accidents" of contact and personality may compel a young couple to enter
• 581 into a "love marriage" (*NB*) against parental wishes. Finally,
583 there is the Santal belief that the higher the form of marriage, the greater its chances of lasting. It is possible, therefore, that differences in desire for marriage stability are a factor in marriage form chosen.

125 From the *bustees* a sample of forty-seven was obtained, with
184 the majority from Daredih and the rest from nearby *bustees*.
583 All were industrial workers living in a *bustee* at the time of

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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We see that the eldest babe is given a name after its grand-father. The tribal deities and ancestor-spirits are worshipped to bring good-luck to the baby. Members of the tribe offer it their best wishes, and it grows up. When in the twelfth year, by further magico-religious rites like cicatrization with boys and tattooing with girls, they are protected against further dangers at the hands of the malignant powers in their future life ; and thus the Santals keep away from harm the family, the clan and the tribe as a whole from unforeseen calamities.

MARRIAGE

"O, she is the light of the house," exclaimed a Santal with evident pride, when we asked him as to why they married. The Santals are a very realistic tribe, and they have long ago forestalled the drive of some of the modern totalitarian states against bachelors. They cannot simply understand the proposition as to how a man can go on in a state of single blessedness. So both sexes despise the unhappy wretch and do not hesitate to call the solitary thing "a thief, a witch or 'no man'," exactly as E. G. Man observed about seventy years ago.[1] So even today, bachelors and old maids are few and far between in the Santal tribal area, and

1. Ref. E. G. Man, *Sonthalia and the Sonthals*.

Si Mukherjea . O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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581 [589] like their loin cloth and *möbna*, every one has a 'light' in his house.

With the abundant freedom in social intercourse such as these tribes enjoy, their marriages are generally
582 love-marriages. The proper age for marriage is now twenty years for the lad, and after puberty for the girl in Mayurbhanj. In the past, Santals married
[177] adult (about their twenty-fifth year) to men or women of choice ; but now, undoubtedly due to the influence of the neighbouring Hindus, the age for matrimony has come down so as even to infringe the age of consent. Child-marriages are more frequent in Mayurbhanj. Brides, however, must be younger than the husbands but we cannot recall having seen or heard of a wife older than the husband.

595 The tribe does not favour polygamy, unless the wife is barren. The younger brother marries the widow of his elder brother to keep the family property intact. In Mayurbhanj, however, several instances of a man's subsidiary wives came to our knowledge, enjoying a status in law and in the society, exactly equal to their *Mitakshòra* sisters. No
595 835 instances of a polyandrous system could be directly met with, bur the institution known as *Dhàulià Sagai*, which permits a younger brother to share his elder brother's wife with impunity, "only they must not go about it very openly," has puzzled the

Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
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interests engross the entire attention of the Santals as a tribe. It is vitally linked up with the economic problem, and when there is a bumper crop and the flowers are full of honey, drinking, dancing and mating flow free with the abanbon characteristic of the tribe. 831

The Santal, even today, is a most prolific race. They cannot at all imagine how a normal man or woman can remain unmarried. We have already seen how the bachelor is looked upon as a pitiable thing by the tribe. If there is such a person nearabout, all Santals try to see him married. Often men and women of the sexually frigid type fall to matrimony, as otherwise, they would be considered as "maica" (hermaphrodite). Similarly, unmarried widows are encouraged to marry and should they stick to a single life, their joking relations make her a butt of ridicule. Even the most Hinduised of the Santals opined that widows without children should marry as soon as possible. So, bachelors are very rare amongst the Santals. An educated Santal told us that he has seen only two such, aged 40/45, in his village. They are the sports of the village. He has not seen an old maid. A Sirdar told us that the only confirmed bachelor in his area wears the dress of a woman (certainly a hermaphrodite.) He has never, in his experience, seen a Santal old maid. An old Santal said that he 581 589 [838]

3r Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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581 589 had nothing but admiration for bachelors and old maids.

832 826 *The Essentials of a Woman's Charms*

As we discuss the requisites for a Santal woman to be erotically attractive, we confess, we were a bit bewildered at the mass of confusing statements that came forth from a large number of Santals of all ages within majority. When everything is boiled down, it can be stated that to have the proper 'sex-appeal' to the Santal, a woman must be plump and bear the dark-brown complexion of a "*magur mach*" (*Magur* fish, Silurus Pelorious, Tilios) as a tipsy old fellow put it with a rare naiveté.[1] Her hips should be fleshy, and breasts, firm and hard, like "*bel*-fruit" (Aegle Marmelos, Correa). Santals generally like women possessing an oval type of face with cheeks having a tendency to bulge out. They hate faces called "Bagh muho" or "bilai muho" (faces like those of tigers and cats). Curiously enough, the average Santals displayed a partiality for a pointed nose with a medium bridge in their women. This is illustrated by the sying, "Mutae usual nana

1 Mr. Fakir Chandra Soren of Baskanali, Bankura, told me that the best complexion was "tel sanṛa" (dark grey glaze).

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CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE

582 THE choice of a bride is limited firstly by the strict observance of tribal endogamy. No Santal who forms an alliance with a non-Santal can hope to be reinstated in society. The only cases that occur are found when individual Santals are away from their village community; Santal women working in "the east" do sometimes become the concubines of men of other races, but I have heard of only one man who had taken to wife a woman of another caste. He was a fugitive from the police who had been away from his village for some years, and he was living with a woman of *Hapi* caste. The choice is further limited by the rules governing clan exogamy and also by the laws that regulate "avoidance" between certain relations by marriage. A man may marry the sister of his elder brother's wife with whom he is on terms of familiarity. On the other hand, he may not marry the sister of his younger brother's wife. All these restrictions are accepted without question; they are part and parcel of the religious and magical framework within which life must be lived.

• 581 Then there are many practical considerations that enter into the forming of any alliance between two families. Parents on both sides of the marriage make careful inquiries about each other's families. The location of the bride's home is of some importance. It is not advisable for a youth to marry a girl from [539] his own village. "A hen and a bride from the same village run to their homes", says the proverb. Just as it is foolish to expect a hen from another house in the village to become domesticated in new quarters, one cannot expect a bride to settle down happily when her own parents are so near at hand. On the other hand, if the bride's home is too far away, the burden and expense of mutual visits become considerable, and so it is best to seek a bride whose home is within a day's easy walk from her future husband's home. Inquiries are made about financial stability and health. Particular attention is paid to signs of leprosy, which is widespread, and also tuberculosis. The qualities most admired in brides are a capacity for hard work and good health, cheerfulness and a steady disposition. In spite of the prevalence 582 of pre-puberty marriage in India, it is extremely rare among [584] Santals. In the only case that has come to my notice, an old man of sixty-five, whose only son had died, arranged a marriage